Modern Tetris: Pro player sets a new speedrun world record, but not everyone is convinced it’s legitimate.

Background: The two common forms of Tetris played today are Classic, which is the original NES version, and Modern, which is based on a ruleset defined by the Tetris Company. Classic Tetris focuses more on smart decisions and not making mistakes as fixing mistakes is very hard, whereas Modern focuses more on speed, style, and multiplayer battles (but has single player modes as well). There are also unofficial Modern Tetris games, the most popular being Tetr.io which is more popular than most official Tetris games. This drama is exclusively about Modern Tetris, and does not include Classic Tetris.

In Modern Tetris, two of the most prestigious titles a player can hold is highest ranked PvP player, a 1v1 multiplayer mode where you send garbage lines to other players as a form of attack, and the 40 line speedrun world record, which is a single player speedrun where you try to clear 40 lines as quickly as possible.

On April 14, 2022, a player named Furry (yes, that’s the actual username) achieved the world record for the 40 line speedrun, at only 14.183 seconds. This achievement was congratulated by many in the community. The speedrun was done in Tetr.io.

However, some community members questioned the legitimacy of the speedrun. Many were suspicious, but didn’t have solid evidence to back up their suspicion. Some community members asked for a handcam (a video showing Furry’s hand movements on the keyboard) as proof.

A handcam video was provided by Furry, but it only showed their knuckles while not showing their keyboard, making it basically useless as proof of legitimacy. The video has been removed since then, so I’ll personally vouch that said video really did exist and isn’t just made up. Despite obviously going against the spirit of a handcam, most people accepted the 14.183 second world record as legitimate, but suspicions continued to linger.

A little while later on May 1, there was significant discussion about the possibility of cheating in Tetr.io’s single player mode. This is specific to single player, as anti-cheat in Tetr.io multiplayer is very good. Personally, I have never played against a cheater in Tetr.io multiplayer.

Details around this part are vague, but a player named JimothyJimothy was involved in a small group of people who investigated the possibility of cheats in Tetr.io single player. They then proceeded to publicize the fact that cheating in single player was possible, but didn’t give instructions on how to do it.

This greatly angered the developer of Tetr.io, Osk. He was outraged that someone would cheat in Tetr.io without permission and then publicize the fact that cheating was possible as it might give information to people who want to cheat. Osk did not consider investigating the possibility of cheating to be a valid reason to test cheats. The main reason for Osk's anger was that JimothyJimothy's group didn't ask for permission before testing cheats.

Osk also believed that testing the cheats due to suspicion of Furry's world record is indirectly accusing Furry of cheating, which could lead to harassment against the accused. JimothyJimothy argued against this, saying that having suspicions is different from outright accusing and harassing someone, and that having suspicions is reasonable.

There were some heated debates on Twitter and Discord on whether JimothyJimothy's group was correct in what they had done, but nothing big came from it. The whole thing died down and people stopped caring. For a while at least.

On May 17, 2022, Osk and prominent community members Mat1jaczyyy and Renge publicly announced that Furry's world record had been investigated, and was found to be cheated. Furry was permanently banned from Tetr.io and their world record was removed. Osk published a blog post about 5 pages long with a summary of the investigation, as well as a message at the end

explaining that the Tetr.io moderators prefer to keep investigations private to prevent possible misinformation from spreading early on, and to prevent witch hunts.

Mat1jaczyyy and Renge’s document went into extreme detail about the investigation which included many investigators beyond just them, and found extensive evidence of cheating. The document is 31 pages long and contains information which even I (as a top 1% Tetr.io player, not to brag or anything) found overwhelming and hard to understand.

Some highlights of the investigation: Furry’s keyboard polling rate is different in their single player play compared to multiplayer play (remember that multiplayer anti-cheat is very good). This implies that Furry only cheated in singleplayer which caused the discrepancy. The handcam video had some audio inconsistencies. There were major statistical discrepancies between Furry and other pro players. Finally, Furry was asked to livestream a play session, but could not play anywhere near as well as the world record they had submitted previously.

Afterwards, JimothyJimothy published a post criticizing how the community’s standards for legitimacy are very low, and that more proof should be demanded. The additional proof would not be difficult for a player to provide, and would make it nearly impossible to cheat and get away with it.

He also argued against Tetr.io moderators' policy of keeping investigations private, and said that if investigations were more open, community members who have technical knowledge of how to catch cheaters could help the Tetr.io moderators investigate potential cheaters. He also mentioned the fact that much of the evidence from the Furry investigation was collected by community members rather than Tetr.io moderators. He concluded that Tetr.io moderators, although well intentioned, don't have as much resources and collective investigative power as an entire community. It's important to note that although JimothyJimothy criticized the Tetr.io moderators' policy, he did not resent the moderators or think they were corrupt.

Many players were shocked at the revelation and were disheartened. Regardless, people moved on somewhat quickly as there was a definitive conclusion due to Furry admitting to cheating in the end, and being permanently banned. Although Furry was banned, they weren't shunned as severely as Merevir (see https://old.reddit.com/r/HobbyDrama/comments/os448d/modern_tetris_aspiring_pro_player_cheats_and_is/) as Furry wasn't toxic to anyone. Also, Furry's motivation, being frustrated by not improving fast enough, was also considered unfortunate rather than malicious. Tetr.io's anti-cheat in singleplayer was (presumably) improved and no one thinks much of this event anymore.